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"The Road to Righteous Judgment"

A Brief On the Negro Question

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Printed 1922, Arkadelphia, Ark.
THE SIFTINGS HERALD PTG. CO.

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NOV 10 '22

22-22729^{no 1}

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FOREWORD

No apology is offered for the sentiments herein expressed. The writer was born and reared in the South, and after an experience of more than twenty-five years at the bar, where a large part of the litigation concerned negroes, he feels at liberty to offer a suggestion which might aid in the solution of America's biggest problem. It is to that end that these thoughts are directed.

J. E. C.

Arkadelphia, Arkansas,
November 1, 1922.



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SINCE the beginning of history, races, nations and communities have had problems with which to deal. The Egyptians have ever wrestled with the river Nile. Invasions by armed foes were the constant dread of ancient and medieval cities and means by which to successfully resist these attacks was the uppermost thought in the minds of their inhabitants. For centuries the English speaking people lived in continuous dread of re-concurrences of the cholera plague, which often depopulated cities, and it is within the memory of the present generation that the dread spectre of yellow fever always haunted the south temperate zone of the Western Hemisphere. Happily for humanity, these troubles and difficulties have been reduced to a minimum, where not completely overcome.

The tariff, immigration, and other economic and political issues bear their relative impor-

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tance to the American public. Each subject receives much thought from its respective champions both of the public press and the platform, but the life or destiny of our country does not depend upon any one or all of these issues.

Immigration is perhaps the weightiest of the above questions, but its seriousness does not consist so much in the nationality of the immigrant, but in what his political creed may be. The most important question which can ever confront any people is the fate of their children and what shall be their moral intellectual and physical complexion. Nothing so touches the instincts of the human heart as the welfare of the children for whom the fathers and mothers are responsible. Therefore the purity of the blood and racial integrity of our offsprings are of greater importance than any legislation which touches only the temporal affairs of life.

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America is now confronted with many problems. World peace is far from an accomplished fact. The troubles between labor and capital, like the poor, we have with us always. The liquor question will not down. The so-called Japanese menace while allayed for a time will continue to be a bugaboo in the mind of the Jingo. Many disquieting issues of lesser importance are magnified in the minds of the people to the extent of the zeal manifested by the individual in whose brain the particular subject finds lodgment. Man is indeed a strange animal whose psychosis can not be accounted for. He can sleep over a smouldering volcano undisturbed by real dangers and at the same time have nightmares over imaginary foes and evils which never materialize and which have no existence in fact. Present and imminent dangers are frequently given the least thought, and those evils which are sometimes considered

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permanent receive the least attention, however insidious they may be.

Sociologists have theorized and speculated and politicians have covered the subject with blandishments, yet no sane or practical solution has been proposed touching the eternal question which is ever pressing itself upon the American public and particularly in the southern states,—*the negro*, his place, social status and destiny.

When the slave trader introduced the African into the American colonies an epoch was created in American history. The negro slave was not responsible for being here. He was a victim of intrigue and treachery, and humanity was outraged when he was torn from his native shore and thrust into bondage in a foreign land. After centuries of slavery which could not be justified in law or morals, he was ruthlessly thrown upon his own resources among his former masters under the

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guise of freedom. Struggling with adversity, and a prey to the unscrupulous, he has blundered along the highway called citizenship for nearly three score years. No race has ever deserved greater solicitude at the hands of its superiors.

No two races have ever possessed greater dissimilarity than the Ethiopian and the Anglo-Saxon. It is taught by certain evolutionists that the straight hair of the chimpanzee is maintained through the development of man as he has progressed upward from the lower order, and is evidence of his simian ancestry, or that he has descended from the monkey. In this theory the negro is not taken into account. He stands as the only species which walks upright, with hair of a kinkiness which sometimes causes it to be referred to as wool. It cannot be said that the torrid climate from which he came, produced this phenomena, because it is not evident in any

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other animal life by which he is surrounded. The conclusion is inescapable that he was created in a class to himself, and has so remained to this day. The color, cranial and other physiological differences between the white man and the negro, create a gulf in racial matters which no ethnologist can bridge.

The practical traits of the white man are absent in the negro. Temperamentally they are as unlike as their colors. The negro is more inclined toward mysticism and the occult. He thrives in lodges and secret societies where symbols and mysteries of the imagination hold high carnival. The tendency of the white man, regardless of circumstances, is upward, for aggression and development. The tendency of the negro, except where inspired by the white man's example, is downward, toward idleness and lethargy.

F. Manetta, an eminent student of the American negro, found negro children in the

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southern states to be mentally alert and bright, sometimes precocious, only to become dull upon approaching the adolescent period. This he did not attribute to environment or lack of opportunity, but to the form and structure of the cranium which did not admit of cerebral growth. However, prodigies were occasionally found among them who had a genius for rythm, as in the case of "Blind Tom" whose instinctive knowledge of sound charmed his hearers in piano music upon the American stage for nearly a generation.

Among races the wider the diversity of color, the greater the danger of friction and the less the inclination to fraternize. This is one of the immutable laws of nature. Caste and social distinction between white people and negroes is not only marked in this country but also in European and South American countries. Chile, and other nations of South America, have large negro populations but no at-

tempt is made there to educate or prepare them for citizenship as in this country. In those countries they are regarded as a menial and subject race, ordained by nature as bearers of burdens and the servants of their superiors.

History records no instance where two peoples of such divergent types as the negro and the Anglo-Saxon have dwelt harmoniously together in the same land on equal terms. If such were possible intermarriages and amalgamation would be the inevitable result. Especially to the Southerner such a course is unthinkable and abhorrent. Nothing could be more repulsive. When he gravitates racially his desire is upward as every instinct of his nature demands.

Social equality with the negroid necessarily implies an invitation to the negro into the home of the white man. An invitation into the home implies an equality of race and blood. An equality of race and blood implies

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an invitation to marry his daughters. Such intermarriage would mean the destruction of the white race and the ideals for which it has striven since the white man first appeared upon the earth. At the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers a stream of blue is blended with a stream of murky yellow. The purity of one is contaminated by the other and a degeneration of the whole is the result. Shades of our forefathers deliver us!

The social barrier between the negro and the white man can never be removed in the South, and the negro here must forever remain socially an Ishmaelite. As a result of this his position in the political and commercial world must be negligible. He will not be looked upon by his white neighbor as other than a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, irrespective of what his education may be or what he may think of himself. The door of hope for him to social recognition is closed. It

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was closed by the Creator in the production of two types of man so divergent. No one should appreciate this more than the black man himself, as he certainly must know that he cannot over-ride distinctions made by nature. All Caucasian races are a unit in this view.

The American Indian possessed qualities of mind and imagination which have never been approached by his African contemporary. His crude flights into the realm of poesy indicated a bright intellect altho untrained. Under stress of conditions and pent up emotions there came from him outbursts of eloquence and oratory which Thomas Jefferson classed with the classics of the ancient world and betokened an undeveloped power, which if trained, would have nothing superior in any race. The Indian sought no social recognition at the hand of the "paleface." He preferred to remain an Indian and desired no association outside of his tribe or race. He was

for more than two centuries the chief problem in American politics until the country finally awoke to a realization that he should be a ward of the government and not a citizen. The Indian question no longer concerns us. It has long been settled wisely and well, and all thanks are due those wise and patriotic statesmen of another generation who met and grappled with the question like men until a proper status was found for the red man and his destiny in America fixed.

The negro has never been understood by the people of the northern and eastern states. This ignorance has been due to lack of contact with him and lack of knowledge of his characteristics. The literature of those sections, and especially prior to the American civil war, disclosed an utter misconception of his nature. Their writers dwelt upon the negro's supposed wrongs and oppression in the South and wreathed into fantasy the sufferings of

the female slave who was pictured as an Aphrodite in the hands of tormentors. Longfellow, Lowell, and other lesser lights continually revelled in pictures of Prometheus bound to the rock.

During the world war the exodus of negroes from the Southern states to the north and mid-west was large. They went to better not only their financial condition, but in the firm belief that the northern man was their friend. They no doubt expected courtesies to which they were not accustomed and had illusioned reasons for these expectations. Certain prominent daily newspapers of the city of Chicago had prior thereto taken the lead as unrelenting critics of the southern white man for his attitude toward the negro. Bitter and vindicative articles and editorials had from time to time filled the columns of these journals, and their criticism was of an intolerant nature. Alas, forsooth, a rude awakening was

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in store for Africanus, upon reaching the "Windy City." Upon his advent there in numbers violent race riots were staged upon the slightest pretext. In many instances he was a victim of maltreatment and brutality merely because of his color. From his reception at the hands of his supposed friends it soon became apparent that the negro is better off where he is best known and understood. Ohio, President Harding's home state, during the first year of his administration, came into the limelight and obtained its share of advertising as an unhealthy place for the "colored brother" to sojourn. The state of Kansas soon followed in a similar demonstration and disgraced itself by mobs and race riots. Oklahoma, a mid-west state, next came upon the scene in an attempt to "ou¹t Herod Herod" in racial conflagration.

President Harding in his first message to Congress declared that "Congress ought to

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wipe the stains of barbaric lynching from the banners of a free and orderly representative government." These are fine words, and every American citizen with patriotic blood in his veins heartily applauds the President for the sentiments. But in order to "wipe the stain" the cause must first be removed, and Mr. Harding offers no remedy for removing the cause. After saying that we face the fact that millions of people of African descent are among our population, the President adds:

"It is unnecessary to recount the difficulties incident to this condition, or to emphasize the fact that it is a condition which cannot be removed. There has been suggested, however, that some of the conditions might be ameliorated by a humane and enlightened consideration of it, a study of its many aspects, and an effort to formulate, if not a policy, at least a national attitude of mind calculated to bring about most satisfactory possible adjustment of relations between the races and of

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each race to the national life. One proposal is the creation of a commission embracing representatives of both races to study and report on the entire subject. The proposal has real merit. I am convinced that in mutual toleration, understanding, charity, recognition of the interdependence of the races and the maintenance of the rights of citizenship, lies the road to righteous judgment."

Mr. Harding's words sound a note of despair. He sees "a condition which cannot be removed," from his viewpoint. He seems to realize that if every suggestion offered in his message is scrupulously followed that only some of the difficulties "might be ameliorated." As a thinking man, he of course realizes that they will not be removed, and that during the possible "amelioration" for the time being, racial differences and antipathies are only slumbering, and subject to be aroused to frenzy at any time and at any place where there is contact between the races. Indeed

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he might as well have used the language of Grover Cleveland who said:

"There is one problem in American life for which I see no solution. It is the race problem, the negro question."

The theory upon which the American government is founded, is that every citizen shall have an equal chance in deciding economic and political questions. This carries with it the right to help govern and constitute the judiciary. The right to the ballot is tantamount to the right to hold office and administer the affairs of state. The white man does not regard the negro as possessing the racial or social fitness to govern the Anglo-Saxon or Caucasian. It would be a waste of mental tissue to argue that these functions should be exercised by the Afro-American in this country. A sympathetic regard and attitude toward the negro in this respect seems to be as far as any section of our country is willing

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to go, regardless of loud protestations in his behalf in those portions of the country where he does not dwell. The native born American citizen of the white race will not look upon his country as other than the white man's inheritance. This sentiment prevails not only in the southern states but throughout the nation and wherever the stars and stripes may wave.

The ballot in the hands of the negro has proven his worst enemy. He is, and will continue to be, the tool of designing politicians wherever he may hold the balance of power. Where his vote is not needed no political party desires to be burdened with his aid. This is shown by the growth of the "lily-white" faction in one of our great political parties.

President Lincoln gravely doubted the wisdom of enfranchisement of the negro and

did not favor a step so extreme. During agitation by radicals in Louisiana for negro franchise Mr. Lincoln wrote Governor Hahn in 1864 saying,

"I barely suggest for your private consideration whether *some* of the colored people may be let in,—as for instance the very intelligent and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks."

When the fifteenth amendment to our Federal constitution was adopted, Lincoln was dead. This amendment is sweeping in its character and gave to every negro male of voting age the right to the ballot, which he yet possesses. If Mr. Lincoln had been alive at the time of this amendment's adoption, there is no reason to believe that he would have changed the opinion expressed by him to Governor Hahn of Louisiana in 1864.

In groping for a solution, certain theorists, or dreamers maintain that in the edu-

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cation of the negro lies the panacea for our present ills. That by the elevation of his intellectual, moral and spiritual tone he will become a better citizen with higher ideals and a greater respect for the law. This is indeed good and admirable as far as it goes, but does not touch the seat of the trouble. Besides the plan might work backward by creating greater competition between the races, produce friction and arouse the blacks to greater aspirations for social equality with the whites. Indeed, the negro is entitled to all the education he can assimilate and which he can adapt to his surroundings, but under present conditions, higher education for him will not cure present evils or extricate him from his environments. Education cannot eliminate racial distinctions; one might as well undertake to remove the slant from the Chinaman's eye by that means.

One of the products of the fifteenth

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amendment to the Federal constitution was the drafting of negro soldiers for the world war. From a legal standpoint, no other course was open. If a citizen and a voter, he was properly required to bear arms for his country. Some made excellent records, but the general result or effect in the minds of many persons, was harmful in that it gave the negro soldier an exalted view of his importance and unduly elevated the impressions of the race at large as to their political and social status. Decorations for merit or achievement during the war caused the colored recipient to no longer regard himself as inferior to the white man, but to entertain stifled hopes of an elevated social position. In many instances, it was noted that a resentment was aroused in his breast against the race at whose table he could not hope to sit or with whose daughters he could never expect to associate.

On the Congo river in Africa, tribal wom-

en have been known to be assaulted by male gorillas. Their form and symmetry evidently appear to the beast more attractive than the female of his species, and his lust leads him to risk dangers which even hunger will not do. It is the old story of the feminine attraction which detained Julius Caesar in Egypt and for which Mark Anthony paid the price at the shrine of the Egyptian queen.

To the potent negro male the figure of the white woman seems to appeal. Social barriers preclude the possibility of him enjoying her society or ever claiming her as his own. The statutes of all southern states forbid marriages between white persons and those of African blood. His passions are aroused and his lust fired. He knows the chances he is taking, but beastly instincts urge him on and the woman is in his forcible embrace. The community is aroused and a lynching follows. These occurrences have become so common

that they barely receive a headline in the newspapers of the day. In each instance, not only is punishment meted out to the brute but the moral tone of the citizenship is lowered. Disrespect for the law in these cases is increasing and our social fabric threatened. No people can violate or trample underfoot the law in one instance without impairing their usefulness to uphold its majesty on other occasions. If the culprit were the only victim of the mob's vengeance, there would be added weight to the argument that the outraged woman should not be further humiliated by having to testify at the trial of her assailant. The people of the so-called "black belt" of the South are the greatest victims of these tragedies, but the occurrences will increase in other portions of the country as the black population disseminates. The error lies in the contact of the two races and their mingling together in industry and commerce. Temptation

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is the basis of these assaults, and will continue until the two races are segregated.

The present head of Tuskegee Institute, who is Booker Washington's successor, some time ago was reported as having warned his people through the public press, that social equality with the whites can never become a reality. The institution over which he presides is largely fostered by the money of white men, and no expression other than one in keeping with the white man's view would be consistent, from that institution. Yet, unless ambition is indeed a glorious cheat, there inevitably lurks in the mind and heart of every educated product of Tuskegee Institute, a secret longing to become the social equal of any other race among whom he dwells. Otherwise education is to him a failure and meaningless.

No race or people can be at its best while handicapped by unnatural conditions. That

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the negroes are handicapped by living among the whites cannot be questioned. Likewise, that the white man is also in a measure, handicapped goes without saying. The best in each race can never develop or be brought out while subject to racial differences and antagonisms. It is an unsound sociological condition which does not permit or encourage the highest ideals in every person living under the same government, and every rule of reason and principle of logic suggest their separation when this cannot be done.

There is an abiding menace to each race while living together. This was voiced by Representative Garrett of Tennessee in December, 1921, when in the lower house of Congress while discussing a proposed anti-lynching bill he said:

"Many of you gentlemen do not know what it is to live in a section in which your wife dare not travel alone for a distance of a

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mile through wood or field. You do not know what it is to raise a daughter amid an environment where from the very time of her reaching the age of ten, so long as she lives, the sword of Damocles hangs over her head."

Commenting on the Tulsa (Oklahoma) riot which occurred during the spring of 1921, one newspaper called attention to the fact that many clashes between the negroes and whites had occurred in recent years north of the Mason and Dixon line. It cited the race riot in East St. Louis, Illinois, on July 7, 1917, in which 125 persons were killed. The riot in Washington, D. C., July 19, 1919, seven persons killed. A few days later in the city of Chicago 38 persons were killed and five hundred wounded. Three days before at Omaha, Nebraska, three killed and many wounded, the mayor of the city was also hanged but rescued in time to save his life.

Racial intolerance was the firebrand in

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each of the instances cited above. It only needed a spark to produce the conflagration. That each community in which negroes and whites dwell, is continually treading over a slumbering volcano, is putting the situation mildly. Each needs to be delivered from the other and our ever perplexing negro problem solved.

Recently there was a movement on foot with head offices in New York City to found a negro empire in Africa. It was to be made up chiefly by negro immigration from America. It was reported that nearly four million negroes were adherents to the idea and that a negro with expansive vision is the originator and leader. As a matter of course such an undertaking is doomed to failure, as all similiar movements have been in the past. It is a mirage altho beautiful in its conception, yet never can be grasped. Like the colonization of the Jews in Palestine, it is only

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a dream. Nostalgia is a disease from which no people are immune. The task is too gigantic and unwieldy. The negroes in this country propagate more rapidly than the whites, and with a colored population of ten million or more, it is impractical to expect a material portion of them to leave the land of their birth however alluring may be the prospects of an African empire. There is no moral, legal or constitutional right to forcibly require them to be exiled to a foreign land. Neither would Uncle Sam be willing to undertake a friendly deportation of those willing to go.

A negro colony in the Harlem section of New York City has a population reaching six figures. Here, it is said that the needs of the negro for food, clothing and entertainment are supplied by their own efforts. The experiment is illuminating and prophetic. If segregated under governmental supervision and

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placed to themselves, their ideals as a race could be attained. The white man placed the American negro in his present surroundings and the white man cannot escape the burden of securing to him the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These three inalienable rights cannot be guaranteed to the black man unless he is favorably situated and given opportunity to expand intellectually, morally and physically.

There can be no question as to white supremacy in this country, even though conditions remain as they are and the two races continue to dwell together. But present conditions will continue to offer an excuse for lawlessness and the existence of the mob spirit in every instance where there is a semblance of a clash between the whites and blacks.

Some interesting figures are available from the Federal census of 1920, as to the density of population of the various states of the

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American union. For instance. The number of inhabitants of Rhode Island is 566.4 to the square mile. Massachusetts has 479.2; New Jersey 420; Connecticut 286.4; and New York 217.9.

The negro is a native of and thrives in a warm climate. Some of the northern states and eastern states with the most dense population have less than one per cent negroes, while certain southern states have a negro population exceeding that of the whites. The negro's home is in the South, where he has a right to remain and where he is adjusted to climatic and other conditions. The population of the southern states, in density, as compared to those states cited above, is insignificant. As an illustration, Alabama has to the square mile only 45.8; Arkansas 33.4; Florida 17.7; Georgia 49.3; Louisiana 39.6; Mississippi 38.6; South Carolina 55.2; Tennessee 56; Virginia 57.4

In each of the southern states above men-

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tioned there are available areas ranging from five to twenty miles' square which are easily adaptable as reservations or colonies, much of the land being productive and capable of a high state of cultivation if cleared and made ready for use. The government should no longer hypocritically insist that the negro is a citizen and enjoys the rights of a citizen. A glance at any roster of court officials or jury list brands such an assertion as a falsehood. He is not in reality a citizen and has never been except in name, and candor demands that we deal fairly with him. Regardless of the adoption of the Fifteenth amendment the negro belongs to a subject race as nature has ordained for him. Europe abounds in subject races. The Croats, Slovenes, Lithunians and others. Some of these subject races are of a high intellectual caste, and have thrived and prospered in Europe for centuries. They have a history and literature of their own but

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had no national existence prior to the world war.

Through a governmental commission the available waste land of the southern states above mentioned should be investigated with the view of providing colonies or reservations. Each reservation could now be obtained at a nominal cost and accomodated to the proximity of the negro population. If needs be several reservations could be located within a single state. Thus populated with negroes these reservations or colonies could be given territorial status or status of insular possessions, and offered the opportunity to demonstrate their ability for self government. No home owner should be required to abandon his home against his will, yet by appropriate national legislation sufficient inducements and encouragement could be offered which would soon locate the bulk of the colored population happily and amicably within the given terri-

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tory. By gradual process of proper adjustments our entire negro population would ultimately occupy the area set apart to them. Here towns would be built, farms opened, school houses constructed, and churches erected. It would mark the beginning of a felicitous era in the life of the American negro, and open an avenue for his moral and intellectual development which has hitherto been closed. The Fifteenth amendment, if expedient, might be repealed. Thus under favorable conditions and unmolested by fear, the negro could work out his destiny among his own people. Being self supporting he would not be a public burden as in the case of the Indians. No further objections could be urged against educating him in the arts and sciences, and he would find his place in our government without contact with the white race and removed from those who would subject him to servile treatment. The purity of the Caucasian blood

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would be preserved, and our children and children's children relieved of a cloud which otherwise will remain over them like a pall. Is not this, indeed, *"the road to righteous judgment,"* referred to by Mr. Harding?

Indifference to a subject so vital to our national life is a crime against civilization. Yea, it is more, it is a crime against those who are yet unborn. The age and generation, which through inertia, indifference or cowardice, refuses to deal with a subject of such supreme importance as the race question, but passes it along in an aggravated form to the next generation, evinces no statesmanship and deserves the condemnation of those who come after them. Until the question is settled rightly, once for all, the American negro must of necessity continue to be the white man's burden.

In my dreams I stood upon the bank of a wonderful river,—the river of American civili-

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zation. It was broad and deep, and upon its mighty bosom were myriads of crafts of various sizes and shapes, some black, the others white, all intermingled and gliding upon the current to the ocean. The white crafts seemed of superior construction and speedier than the others. The mist hung low, and my heart was heavy as I beheld the haunted look upon the faces of the beings within the crafts, and especially upon those within the black crafts as the two colors jostled each other. I beheld the disregard which the white crafts had for the black crafts and the resentful conduct of the black crafts as they each sped on their way. Often they would by chance collide and the air resounded above the din of the waters with the shouts and curses from those on board. A fierce conflict would ensue, resulting in the destruction of many crafts of each color. And I heard the moans of those who went down and heard the voices of infants and

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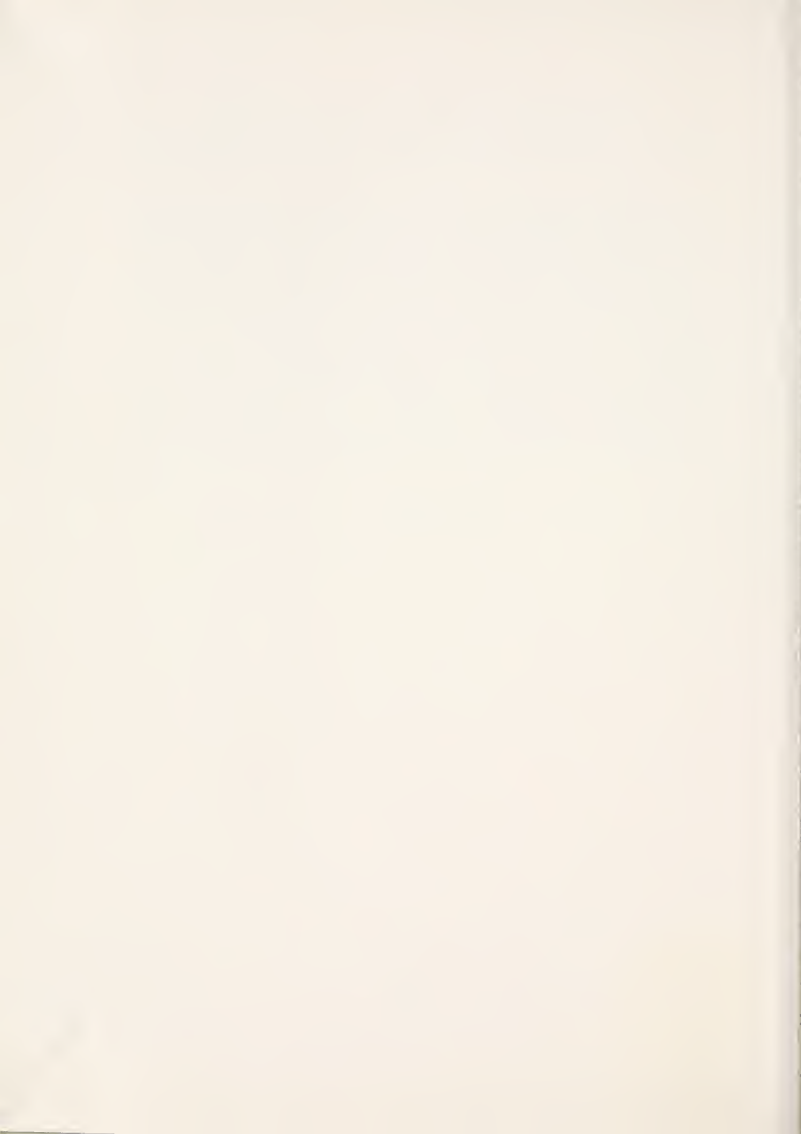
aged ones who had no part in the conflict. And I heard the voice of the wise man who said, "It is unnecessary to recount the difficulties incident to this condition, or to emphasize the fact that it is a condition which cannot be removed."

The scene shifted. I stood further down stream. I saw a dividing line in the middle of the river with the white crafts on the right and the black crafts on the left, each gliding swiftly and peacefully to the ocean. The sun was shining and my heart was glad as I heard the laughter of children and the songs of those on board as each color sped onward towards its destination without contact with each other. I heard the voice of the wise man again and he said, "I am convinced that in mutual tolerance, understanding and charity between the races lies *the road to righteous judgment.*" And I saw the crafts all finish their journey, the white crafts keeping to the

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right and the black crafts keeping to the left, and altho the speedier and superior crafts on the right were often called to the assistance of those on the left, yet discord had left the river and there were smiles on the faces of those who formerly had haunted looks as they all sped onward toward their common destination.

THE END





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